

The Will of God

by Dr. George E. Failing

Though the Thessalonian church was truly regenerate and earnestly missionary, Paul was praying that God might permit him to return to this church to the end that he might "perfect that which was lacking in their faith." Then he reveals the "lacking thing" in 4:3 and 5:23 of this book Paul's prayers and exhortations were specific, your sanctification. In this passage two things are revealed about sanctification.

Sanctification is not merely a doctrine: It is a manner of life, a way of living. Paul here calls it a "walk."

The Old Testament contains a couple of interesting references to this walk. In Genesis 32:31, after Jacob had wrestled with God and obtained the blessing, it says, "He limped upon his thigh." God's blessing will transform your walk by transforming you; it will mark you as the Lord's.

Then in Isaiah 3:16 there is another reference, this one regarding the "walk" of godless women. They go out on walks to be seen, and to see with wanton eyes. How do they walk? "Mincing as they go," drawing attention by the shuffling of the feet. But sanctification will take the very desire for this kind of walk out of your heart.

a. Walk before men in a becoming manner. The Authorized Version of verse 12 reads simply "honestly." It means that but more. Doubtless it could mean "in a manner not causing needless offence to sinners." There is an offence to the preaching of the Cross, but let us not make our presentation add to it. Walk also in a manner calculated to win sinners. This is not to be accomplished through a procedure of compromise, but through earnest, loving solitude and pains-taking, well-guided effort. Perhaps even this suggestion might be included here: walk in a manner becoming to your own personality. Do not affect another's speech or religious manner.

b. Walk to please God. Sanctification, like regeneration, is more than a social scheme of things. It is a heavenly walk, a walk with the purest motives. Otherwise God could not approve of it at all. To walk in this manner will issue in discovering and eliminating mistakes of conduct. You will learn things of conduct. You will learn things as you walk with God's eye upon you. Oh, that we might remember that personal piety and personal purity go hand-in-hand. A person therefore cannot please God and disregard his personal conduct towards others.

This kind of a sanctified life is the will of God. Paul does not say that God is willing for us to live a holy life. Neither does he say that God would love us and appreciate it if we would allow Him to sanctify us. Most emphatically he declares: "This is the will of God." Reference is made to the same thought in Romans 12:1, 2—Present yourselves . . . be transformed . . . prove what is the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God.

God will cease to shed light on the pathway of those who refuse to walk in His will. This may be the reason that they would not follow God in sanctification. It may be the reason why many are not on the mission field, or not in the ministry, or not in victory. They have ceased to walk in God's walk. God does not permit us to select what part of His will we shall obey and what we shall not give heed to. "He that rejecteth, rejecteth not man, but God, who also hath given unto us His Holy Spirit" to accomplish this work in us. Do not reject God, or the sanctifying power of His Spirit.

Does this look rigorous and exclusive? It is the best and most satisfying thing you can ever do. "Our wills are ours to make them thine." Nothing is quite so sweet as the joy of surrender to one whom you love and unreserved-

EACH OF US—AN ATMOSPHERE MAKER

by Glenn D. Hughes

Each of us is an atmosphere-maker. We determine the kind of atmosphere that will permeate and influence our lives. We regulate its climate. We blend its atmosphere. Furthermore, the atmosphere in which we live is transmitted to our surroundings. Consistent with the principle of creation that like begets like, we color the scenery of life; we affect the outlook and response of others.

The atmosphere surrounding our living may be stormy and surcharged with tensions and human irritation resulting from "the hostility pattern of our personality." Or it may be calm and surcharged with contentment and human understanding tempered by love.

Christ provides us with the method and its demonstration in bringing about the more favorable change in our attitudes and moods. When He found a tense and hostile situation, He was not overcome by evil, but He overcame evil with good. He did not conform by returning like for like; He transformed by living up to the "good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

The atmosphere of our marital and family life needs more Christian grace in it. To strengthen the marriage bond and to solidify family loyalties, we must become transformed—transformed by the renewing of our minds, "letting God remould our minds from within, so that we may prove in practice that the plan of God is good for us."

The mishandling of the petty, irritating situations resulting from the pressures of life, much work, little rest, and budget worries may have serious consequences. On the other hand, Family Worship, augmented by a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, will do much to change the climate of our personal and social relationships.

The atmosphere of heaven is to be found in the center of God's will. Here is the source of equanimity. Here life's irritations and that feeling of being "out of sorts" will dissolve, and the atmosphere of home, church, and life will be surcharged with love, joy, peace, and understanding.

—Free Methodist

PREACH THE WORD

F. B. Meyer believed that the expository preacher will be especially God-used. He wrote, "The Holy Spirit's power proceeds along the line of the Word of God. . . . It is His sword; the life-giving seed which He has vitalized; the word in which the Word is incarnated. Through long centuries He has been at work communicating to prepared natures the thoughts of God. . . . The ministry, therefore, which is most carefully based on Scripture, and honors Scripture, and saturates itself with Scripture, is the ministry which the Spirit of Truth can co-operate with in the most perfect abandonment."

ANYONE SAVED LATELY?

The story is told of a grandmother from an evangelical church in this country whose children gave her a trip to England, from which her parents had come. On her visit to Westminster Abbey she was intensely interested in all the guide had to say, but made no comment throughout the tour. Finally, as she was about to leave, turning to the guide, with a single gesture she swept that rich storehouse of historic Christian greatness, and said, "Young man, has anyone been saved here lately?" That left the guide silent. It is a question which might well be put to any church which has settled in its traditions.

—The Free Methodist

ly trust. Once done, future experience will show it the wisest and most joyous choice you ever made.